

THE epicenter

Employee Newsletter of the VA Palo Alto Health Care System • Edition 3, 2006

Surgeons Team with Robots to Provide the Best Care for Veterans

By Katelin Campbell

The VAPAHCS has some of the finest doctors in the world and is now home to one of the world's most technologically advanced surgical robots.

On Sept. 26, doctors performed the first surgery here using the da Vinci Surgical System, a robotic system that is designed to enhance the operating abilities of a surgeon by increasing dexterity, control, precision and enhanced visualization.

The da Vinci Surgical System combines a surgeon's skills, robotic and computer technologies and laparoscopic principles to allow complex, minimally invasive surgeries to be performed. The system consists of a surgeon's console, where the surgeon sits during the course of the surgery, and the operating station, which has four robotic arms.

At the console, the surgeon's hands are wired with sensory devices. The movements of the surgeon's wired hands are then replicated and ultimately executed by four robotic arms. A 3-channel vision system makes it possible for the surgeon to view magnified, 3-dimensional images of the patient's operating site from the console, offering increased clarity throughout the surgery.

"It is important for patients to know that the robot is unable to function without the input of the surgeon and does not perform



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any functions independently," said Surgeon Bassem Safadi, who has used the da Vinci Surgical System approximately a dozen times. Dr. Safadi was a staff physician at the VAPAHCS, and a former faculty member at Stanford University's Department of Surgery. He is now an associate professor in the Department of Surgery at the American University of Beirut.

The robot mimics the surgeon's movements but has complete stability and a 360-degree range of motion (opposed to the limitations of a surgeon's wrist). The clinical outcomes with surgeries performed using the da Vinci versus standard surgical procedures have been promising in improving outcomes by reducing the length of stay, complications, and blood loss in many types of surgeries.

Dr. Safadi notes, "There is initial 'separation anxiety' for some physicians as they are not operating directly on the patient. However,

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A Word From Our Director



**Elizabeth Joyce Freeman, Director
VA Palo Alto Health Care System**

As we enter Fiscal Year 2007, before we plunge into the next year of performance measures, JCAHO unannounced inspections and OIG reviews, I would like all of you to take a moment to stop and reflect on our collective accomplishments. As we compile materials for our second VAPAHCS Annual Report, I am once again incredibly impressed with the power of your passion and commitment in providing the highest quality health care for our veterans. The evidence is everywhere.

In examining outcomes on high priority performance measures, VAPAHCS:

- Passed all six quadrants for Clinical Practice Guidelines (Cancer; Cardiovascular; Endocrinology; Infectious; Tobacco; Long Term Care)
- Met or exceeded new patient wait times in all eight clinical areas (Audiology; Cardiology; Eye Care; Gastroenterology; Mental Health; Orthopedics; Urology; Primary Care)
- Far exceeded targets for Inpatient and Outpatient Patient Satisfaction
- Passed all Mental Health Performance Measures
- Passed the Financial Index

VAPAHCS' positive media coverage in FY 2006 was equally remarkable:

- VAPAHCS was featured in 148 positive print media articles in FY 2006, an increase of 50 additional stories over FY 2005
- We received national media coverage from the New York Times, Business Week, JAMA, ABC Nightly News, four stories with the Associated Press, eight stories with National Public Radio, US News and World Report, the New Yorker Magazine, News Hour with Jim Lehrer, Rolling Stone Magazine and the New England Journal of Medicine
- The San Francisco Chronicle ran six positive VAPAHCS stories and the San Jose Mercury News ran ten positive stories with two on the front page

- VAPAHCS was also featured in numerous positive local and regional television media stories. These positive media events not only portrayed VAPAHCS in a positive light, they were extremely effective publicizing the entire VA in a positive fashion.

We received accolades from our numerous visitors throughout the year, including:

- Mr. Gary Trudeau, author of the Doonesbury series
- Two visits from VA Deputy Secretary Gordon Mansfield
- Lt. General Satler of the 1st Marine Division
- The Sgt. Major of the Marine Corp, John Estrada
- The National Commander of the DAV, Mr. Paul Jackson, and the Executive Director of the DAV, Mr. Dave Gorman
- Deputy Commandant of the Marine Corp, General Huly
- The Commandant of the Marine Corp, General Hagee
- VA and DoD Seamless Transition Officials including Dr. Stephen Jones, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense, and Dr. Ed Huycke, VHA Office of DoD Coordination

Awards:

- VAPAHCS researcher Dr. David Rehlman received the prestigious \$2.5M NIH Director's Pioneer Award for 2006; this is the second consecutive year a VAPAHCS researcher has received this award
- VAPAHCS staff member Ms. Betty Wexler, RN, received the Marsha Goodwin Beck award for Clinical Excellence for her contributions in geriatric care
- VAPAHCS staff member Ms. Beth Stovall received a VA Public Affairs Award for the creation of the "Veterans Serving Veterans" program recognizing the over 600 employees who are veterans
- VAPAHCS was recognized by AHA's Hospitals and Health Network Magazine's as one of the top "100 Most Wired" hospitals, for the fourth time
- Sandra Parkes RN, David Renfro RN, Anita Straley RN, Judith Thielen RNP, Dr. Fuad Freiha and Deborah Sisty were recognized for the Innovations Award in Ambulatory Care for Implementation of ACA Strategies In Specialty Clinics

So as we prepare for the holidays and reflect back on FY 2006, please know how much we all have accomplished and how much I appreciate each and every employee's unique contributions. Thank You!

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Elizabeth J. Freeman".

**Elizabeth Joyce Freeman
Director**

Tandem Cycling Is Off and Running

This summer the Western Blind Rehabilitation Center (WBRC) added a new and exciting component to their recreation therapy program – tandem bicycles (bicycles built for two).

The program came about thanks to the enthusiasm of John Wood, a Low Vision and Orientation & Mobility specialist, who was encouraged by the director of the WBRC, Elizabeth Jessen, an avid cyclist herself. Jessen got the word out to the local cycling community that WBRC was going to start a tandem program and

being in such a rich cycling area, it didn't take long to connect with several well known experienced tandem captains (the person on the front). Wood took each volunteer through a special orientation and training that included being on the back of the tandem (stoker position) blind-folded.

As they started to get the program going, the volunteers realized that the program would even be better with some new equipment. Along came Bell Sport, which donated a variety of gear including helmets, gloves and a new tandem bicycle. The local Chain Reaction Bicycle shop also donated items like water bottles and some clothing. This really moved the program forward and with Wood's passion and drive they started riding every Tuesday afternoon around 4:00 p.m.

The program to date has done 26 rides and has introduced 20 veterans and active duty soldiers with sight loss to the fine sport of tandem cycling. Many of the new riders have become hooked on the sport and have plans to continue tandem cycling when they return home. The loss of sight often restricts one's athletic activities and the ability to go out and get a good cardiovascular workout. This program has restored this ability and has given participants the confidence and motivation to continue a healthy lifestyle.



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Pharmacy Service Celebrates National Pharmacy Week

The Pharmacy Service is using this year's National Pharmacy Week (October 22-28, 2006) as an opportunity to bring attention to the important contributions made by pharmacists and pharmacy technicians to promote the safety and well-being of patients in our health care system.

The Pharmacy Service provides 24-hour coverage seven days a week. Patient care is provided by a staff of more than 100 pharmacists, residents, students, and technicians practicing in the inpatient and ambulatory care setting.

"Most people are aware that inpatient pharmacy services screen all inpatient medication orders for dosage, drug-drug interactions, allergies and drug-disease interactions," said Kelly Robertson, chief of Pharmacy Services. "But what many people don't realize is that pharmacists are also involved with therapeutic monitoring of all patients on parental nutrition, warfarin, aminoglycosides, and other high alert medications assigned to specific patient care."

The outpatient pharmacies at Palo Alto, Menlo Park, Livermore, San Jose and Monterey provide comprehensive prescription services. Pharmacists provide medication management for patients in the General Medicine, Anticoagulation, Diabetes, and Home Based Primary Care Clinics.

"In 2005, we expanded our clinical pharmacy coverage to include HIV and Mental Health Clinics and have begun to use innovative telehealth strategies to provide care to patients at remote locations," said Robertson.

"In addition, we have recently added a new primary care pharmacy clinic to help meet VA performance measure initiatives which target high risk patients in need of medication optimization, including lipid, erythropoietin, and hypertension therapy. It's an exciting and innovative place to work and we are proud of our service to veterans."



Curt Campbell

Dr. Matilde Nino-Murcia Receives the Inspirational Immigrant Award



Upwardly Global, a San Francisco-based nonprofit organization, will present the Inspirational Immigrant Award to Dr. Matilde Nino-Murcia at its fifth annual fall seminar. The award is given annually to an immigrant who has built an impressive career and risen to the highest levels of their profession.

Born in a rural village in Columbia, Dr. Nino-Murcia always knew she wanted to help people and cure disease. Encouraged by her mother, she pursued a career as a doctor. After graduating at the top of her class from La Universidad Nacional de Colombia's School of Medicine in Bogota, she immigrated to the United States. She completed her residency at Thomas Jefferson University Hospital in Philadelphia and later obtained her Board Certification from the American Board of Radiology.

Dr. Nino-Murcia now serves at VAPAHCS and Stanford University. As Acting Chief of PAVA from 1999 to 2000, she spearheaded the implementation of new radiology technologies. She also teaches an elective course in radiology at Stanford. She teaches and mentors first and second-year residents, who spend a significant part of their training at the VA hospital. Dr. Nino-Murcia has also served on the admissions panel at Stanford Medical School.

David A. Relman Receives NIH's Pioneer Award

Dr. David A. Relman received the National Institutes of Health (NIH) Pioneer Award at their September Symposium. The Pioneer Award is a key component of the NIH Roadmap for Medical Research. The program supports exceptionally creative scientists who take highly innovative approaches to major challenges in biomedical research.

The award recipients are a diverse group of forward-thinking scientists whose work could transform medical research. The award will give them intellectual freedom to pursue exciting new research directions in a range of scientific areas. The awardees will each receive \$2.5 million in direct cost over five years.

Dr. Relman is an associate professor of microbiology and immunology at Stanford and is chief of infectious disease at VAPAHCS. With this award, he will explore the roles in health and disease of microbial communities indigenous to humans. This is the second year in a row that VAPAHCS has won this prestigious award. Last year it was won by Dr. Thomas Rando.



Project HIRED Recognition Award Given to Rochelle Brandon



At Project HIRED's 21st Annual Recognition Breakfast, awards were given to volunteers, clients and companies who have assisted Project HIRED in achieving its mission "to assist individuals with disabilities gain competitive employment and advance their careers through partnerships with industry."

At this year's award breakfast, the Manny Lucero Inspirational Achievement Award was presented to Rochelle Brandon – employee of Project HIRED's call center services at VAPAHCS. The recipient of this award is someone who through their personal achievements and active support of the fellow job seekers with disabilities has helped to motivate and inspire others to keep reaching for their goals.

Resource & Materiel Management Week



A&MMS Employees: Standing, left to right: Ron White, Lito Milan, Patrick Meusel, Michael Hart, James Williams, Diane Adams, Marvin Leggett, Larry Francesconi, Mark Vandermeer, Don Gintel, Gordy Batzer. Seated, left to right: Hoa "Flower" Doan, Mary Ann Centanni, Gil Medeiros.

The Association for Healthcare Resource & Materiel Management of the American Hospital Association designated October 1-7 as the National Healthcare Resource & Materiel Management Week. This special designation recognizes your fellow employees for their work in Acquisition and Materiel Management Service (A&MMS) and the contributions they make to the success of VAPAHCS.



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Who are they and what do they do? A&MMS, with approximately 98 employees under John Tribuiano, Service Chief, is responsible for all supplies and equipment (except for pharmaceuticals and computers) for the health care system. The Service is currently organized in five sections: Purchasing, which places orders with vendors; Material Management, which receives, stores, issues and accounts for items; Supply Processing & Distribution, which handles all medical items; Resource Sharing, which brings in revenue through utilization of excess capacity (San



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Mateo County's Willow Clinic at Menlo Park for example); and Emergency Management, which plans for disaster preparedness. In addition, A&MMS is responsible for mail and interoffice distribution, relocation of equipment (the Move Team), and the recycling program for the health care system.



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How do they do this? Leadership consistently challenges the A&MMS staff to look for better, smarter, quicker and more efficient ways to support its customers. They are focused on customer service, how they can be more responsive to staff requests and make the supply process work better for the VAPAHCS staff and the veterans we serve. So, the next time you see a supply technician stocking your Omni-Cell, or a motor vehicle operator delivering a piece of equipment, give him or her a salute and a word of thanks, particularly during Resource & Materiel Management Week.



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Commandant of the Marine Corps Visits His Marines at VAPAHCS



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General Michael Hagee, Commandant of the Marine Corps, and his wife took time out of a hectic schedule to spend most of the day at the VAPAHCS. After visiting the main hospital at Palo Alto, including the laboratory, ICU, hospice and pharmacy, he spent more than an hour on the Traumatic Brain Injury Unit visiting active duty troops and later visited the National Center for PTSD and patients there.

The highlight of his visit, by his own account, was seeing a young Marine Corporal walk for the first time. General Hagee had visited Cpl. Tim Jeffers at least four times while he was at Bethesda Naval Hospital following an IED explosion in Iraq. A double amputee with a severe head injury, they thought Jeffers might not live. He survived. Within a month of arriving at the Palo Alto Polytrauma Center, Jeffers was walking on “stubbies,” thanks to the sensitive and heartfelt care of Louis Givens, his VAPAHCS prosthetist. During the next two months, Jeffers managed difficult balance issues and learned to walk on his C-legs – the very same legs he used to walk for the Commandant.

There were few dry eyes as everyone with the Commandant watched in admiration as Jeffers walked across the room. It was one of those moments that makes you so proud to work for VA – a moment you never forget!



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Cpl. Tim Jeffers with General Hagee standing to the right, and Louis Givens, VAPAHCS prosthetist, in the background.

Protect Yourself, Family, and Patients from the Flu

Last year, over 200,000 people were hospitalized in the United States, and more than 36,000 people died as a result of the flu. It is the 6th leading cause of death in American adults.

Although 90% of deaths occur in people over 65, the highest rates of infection occur in children. Healthy children younger than 2 years are as likely to be hospitalized from complications as those over 65 years of age. Additionally, pregnant women, people over the age of 50 years, and people of any age with underlying medical conditions are also at risk from complications of the flu – and you are at risk for transmitting influenza to others if you do not get vaccinated.

“The national average for health care workers receiving the influenza vaccine is about 40%,” said Pharmacist Russell Ryono, Infection Control Practitioner at VAPAHCS. “This season, our goal is for 60% of staff to receive the vaccine. The rationale for this year’s drive is to promote the understanding that the influenza vaccination is one step we can take to protect our patients and the VA Community.”

Why don’t more people get inoculated? “One prevailing myth is that the vaccine will make them sick,” said Laura Higby, RN, Infection Control Practitioner at the Livermore Division, “But you cannot get the flu from the flu shot”, as the vaccine is made from inactivated virus. If someone develops the flu, it is because they were already exposed to the virus before their body was able to

make enough antibodies. Although the vaccine is 70-90 percent effective in preventing the flu, those who still get the virus generally have less severe symptoms.

VA employees, volunteers and contract workers can obtain their influenza vaccination at the Employee Health Flu Vaccine Clinic. Mary Spring, RNP, emphasizes that drop-in times for the vaccine will also be available in Employee Health. They will even schedule field clinics for various units. Contact Joy Sakamoto, LVN, at ext 66381 or 22222 for Palo Alto or Menlo Park, and Laura Higby, RN, at ext 35615 for field clinics in Livermore. Employees at the Community-Based Outpatient Clinics can get vaccination information from their supervisors.

Employee Health Drop-in Times for the Flu Vaccine after November 22nd:

Location	Days	Times
Palo Alto	Mon -Fri	10-11am & 3-4pm (8-8:30am for night staff)
Menlo Park	Tues & Thurs	8:00-11:30am & 1:00-4pm
Livermore	Mon -Fri	8:00-9:00am & 4:00-4:30pm

Betty Wexler Wins Marsha Goodwin-Beck Award for Excellence in Geriatric Care



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VA Palo Alto nurse Betty Wexler, clinical nurse specialist at the Geriatric Research, Education and Clinical Center was selected from a group of exceptional nominees to receive the Excellence in Geriatric Clinical Care Delivery Award.

"Ms. Wexler is an outstanding clinician who exemplifies excellence in the delivery of care and has had an effective role in improving the quality of health care for aging veteran patients," read the award citation. "She is recognized by colleagues as a positive role model for the health care profession and is recognized by management and colleagues for excellence and dedication in the provision of geriatric care."

This award, in honor of Marsha Goodwin-Beck, recognizes an individual practitioner in any health care setting who has demonstrated excellence in "hands on" direct geriatric patient care and is recognized by the patients served, or their families, as an outstanding health care practitioner.

Ms. Wexler has received numerous accolades from team members, veterans, and their families in the form of positive feedback and letters. Her strong focus on interdisciplinary care has provided and supported frail veterans remaining in their own homes for as long as possible. Her knowledge and experience in acute care, home hospice and home care have helped her to facilitate the provision of both community and VA services at home.

VAPAHCS Nurse Remembers Son Through Art

By Shirley Paulson

Chief Nurse for Medicine, Surgery and Critical Care



Curt Campbell

When my son entered the US Marines last August at age 18, I was proud of him but missed him terribly. At the 2005 PIQF Quilt Festival, I discovered Tammie Bowser's Quilted Photography system. I purchased the software and was able to create a quilt based on his first Marine portrait in his dress blues.

This was my first photography quilt, and I used 9600 1-1/4" squares (sewn to 3/4 squares). This quilt honors him and all the young men who are serving our country. My son is stationed at Camp Pendleton in San Diego as part of the 2nd battalion, 1st Marine Division as a CAAT (combined anti-armor tank) weapons specialist and is slated to go to Japan, Korea and Australia in January 2007 for seven months and to Iraq in spring of 2008. Creating this quilt was very therapeutic for me and my way of "letting my oldest son go." It was absolutely a labor of love!

Awakened

By Army Sgt. Jay Wilkerson

Discovering the life that dwells inside me again.

Learning and realizing where life is taking me and what obstacles lie waiting and wanting to be awakened.

My life before being injured in Iraq was good for me – I lived a very peaceful and good life.

Today and forever I've awakened the strength and hope of a second life.

Simply living my life and cherishing what my feelings are

But most important loving myself for who I am the way I am.

Sgt. Wilkerson was seriously injured in Iraq when an IED exploded on March 28, 2006. The explosion left him with multiple facial and body injuries and killed his best friend who was in the truck with him. He is in the VAPAHCS' outpatient brain injury program (BIRU).



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EMPLOYEE NEWS

New Employees

Fatima Aguila
Social Work

Iquo J Akpan
Long Term & Ext Care

Amy D Alderman
Social Work

Eric A T Jr Allen
Business Office

Laurie J Andersen
Chaplain

Robin R Arita
Dental

Armin R Azar
Psychology

Harold S Bangah
Nursing, Mental Health

Estrellita B Barcemo
Long Term & Ext Care

Margaret B Beggs
Social Work

Amit Bernstein
Psychology

Gina D Bien
Psychiatry

Korin M Bisch
Police & Security

Maxwell Boakye
Surgery

Thomas R Bowe
Office Of Director

Todd J Brinton
Medical

Amor A Bungubung
Fiscal

Mandi L Burnette
Psychiatry

Deborah L Butler
Social Work

Susanjane M Cabanayan
Long Term & Ext Care

Gary N Cabardo
Social Work

Katelin Campbell
Office Of Director

Dzung M Cao
Radiology

Angelina Capuyan
Social Work

Milagros E Carino
Nursing, Mental Health

Ilse V Catindig
Phys Med & Rehab

Lindsay C Celli
Social Work

Cynthia L Chan
Recreation

Vickie Y Chang
Psychology

Mina M Charon
Medical

Ann Nmn Chen
Dental

Stefanie S Chin
Social Work

Victor Y Chiu
Research

Benjamin I Chung
Surgery

Lorinda Chung
Medical

Maria L Clayton
Long Term & Ext Care

Camilla Coakley
Social Work

Charles C Colburn
Long Term & Ext Care

Josephine C Collins
Nursing, Med/Surg/Cr Care

Denise C Cooper
Psychology

Daniel W Cord
IRMS

Victoria C Cordova
Business Office

Eric F Crawford
Research

Robert M Cummins
Police & Security

Martha Cutcomb
Social Work

Ann Dang
Surgery

Barbara J Dearmin
Medical, Extended Care

Melanie D Del Rio
Nursing, Rehabilitation

Alaina Mae Difuntorum
Research

Shelmane Diggs
Nursing, Rehabilitation

Remigio L Dolopo
Environmental Mgt

Jessica S Donington
Surgery

Dawna K Dougherty
Social Work

Teresita F Dumaop
Fiscal

Tamarra M Dupart
Psychology

Barbara T Egan
Medical, Extended Care

Brownie C Elder
Nursing, Ambulatory Care

Jennifer K Fairchild
Psychology

Sherry Fairchild-Kienlen
Social Work

James I Fann
Surgery

Vincent C Sr Fernando
Engineering

Julie E Fitt
Research

Kayla C Forster
Recreation

Zeno E Franco
Research

Fuad S Freiha
Surgery

Yoko N Galbraith
Social Work

Frank L Galvan
Nutrition & Food

Silverio C Gasmen Jr
Engineering

Marion Gautschi
Social Work

Roger Y D Gee
Engineering

Elisabeth M Goodwin
Research

Charles D Goss
Anesthesiology

Phillip J Griffin
Engineering

Joe M Guerricaeitia
Research

Michelle B Halpern
Research

Stephanie M Harman
Medical, Extended Care

Jeffrey R Haugh
Engineering

James L Hauschild
Nutrition & Food

Lara H Hefflin
Psychology

Yen-Dong Nmn Ho
Medical

Jill R Hockemeyer
Psychology

Robert M Holaway
Psychology

Mariko Holloway
Pharmacy

Jessica M Houser
Acq & Mat Mgmt

Alana L Howard
Social Work

Jolene N Hulse
Nursing, Med/Surg/Cr Care

Chester V Jackson
Engineering

Priya Jayachandran
Research

Christopher S Jones
Psychiatry

Earl S Kallio
Pharmacy

Carole M Keim
Research

Adam R Kendall
Medical, Extended Care

Kathleen E Kendra
Psychology

Bethany R Ketchen
Psychology

Benjamin Nmn Khoo
Nursing, Rehabilitation

Simon Y Kim
Psychology

Sophia J Kim
Medical, Extended Care

David S Klajic
Research

Laura J Kleinman
Social Work

Janice R Kuo
Psychology

Ava A Lee
Medical, Extended Care

Lorraine P Leskin
Psychiatry

Cindy Levin
Psychiatry

Jason Lillis
Psychology

Clement S Limjoco
Nutrition & Food

Percy A Link
Research

Leilane B Lobres
Business Office

Elizabeth A Macayan
Social Work

Katelyn P Mack
Research

Heather A Majors
Nursing, Med/Surg/Cr Care

Simon M Manalo
Nutrition & Food

Christina Martinez
Social Work

John P Mccarthy
Canteen

Ralph Nmn Mccoy
Chaplain

Shana D Mcdaniel
Anesthesiology

Thomas M Mclean
Engineering

Abel Miranda
Anesthesiology

Sarah P Moline
Pharmacy

Raquel Morales
Social Work

Seshadri Mudumbai
Anesthesiology

Eric M Nefstead
Chaplain

Kim T Nguyen
Human Resources

Cari L Nicholson
Audiology & Speech

Catherine R Noellert
Chaplain

Darlene Y O Campo
Acq & Mat Mgmt

Mijiroghene Okobiah
Pharmacy

Ellen M Olson
Medical, Extended Care

Elisa M Overall
Research

Marjorie Paviera
Nursing, Med/Surg/Cr Care

Esmeralda M Perez
Social Work

Christopher J Petrone
Social Work

Donna Phan
Nursing, Med/Surg/Cr Care

Pamela L Polk
Nursing, Ambulatory Care

William V Powlus
Social Work

Shristi S Reddy
Research

Dominador Roa Iii Ronquillo
Phys Med & Rehab

Heysielen U Rozborski
Nursing, Mental Health

Tiffany A Scharton
Human Resources

Jennifer L Schies
Research

Renee A Schneider
Chief Of Staff

Arthur R Segovia
Office Of Director

Kathrine S Severin
Domiciliary Care

Mei-Chiung Shih
Research

Tiffanie Sim
Psychology

Stephen L Skirboll
Surgery

Deborah S Smith
Medical, Extended Care

David C Steiner
Nursing, Med/Surg/Cr Care

Terry A Stowe
Police & Security

Elisabetta Strada-Russo
Psychology

Wilaiwan Tanti
Nursing, Ambulatory Care

Sara Tavakoli
Office Of Director

Marie L Tener
Nursing, Ambulatory Care

Wendy T Thanassi
Medical

Mark Tirman
Long Term & Ext Care

Robert P Trefault
Human Resources

Mai Han N Trinh
Business Office

Thomas M Iii Turrey
Business Office

Rishoo Tyagi
Recreation

Alexander G Vasey
Police & Security

Tessa L Walters
Anesthesiology

Leanne B Young
Recreation

Merryl M Young
Chief Of Staff

Lu Yuan
Nursing, Med/Surg/Cr Care

Siu Yuen
Nursing, Ambulatory Care

Danilo B Zapata
Anesthesiology

Mark Zemke
Nursing, Rehabilitation

EMPLOYEE NEWS

Employee Service Awards

10 Years		20 years			
Robert Anson Social Work	Jon Wada Surgical	Elizabeth Benishin Medical	Laura Peters Psychology	Rodolfo Howard Canteen	Shirley Gardner Nursing MH
Ferdinand Bantolino Nursing LTC	Alfred Walthall Spinal Cord Injury	Jodi Bisely Chief of Staff	Jeffrey Petro Ambulatory Care	Emelda Kalkbrenner Nursing M/S	Richard Geurts Nursing M/S.
Mary Anne Bord-Hoffman Nursing AC	15 Years	Randy Boyd A&MMS	Paulette Pierce Dental	Jacqueline Kershner Nutrition & Food	Melvin Henry Nursing AC
Jennifer Ellman Nursing AC	Roy Aquino Business Office	Erika Curran Social Work	Monti Powell Nutrition & Food	Norine Krueger Blind Rehab. Center	Kenneth Humphrey A&MMS
Thalia Falcon Social Work	Kevin Cherry Engineering	Marsha Davis Chaplain	Linda Rosen Audiology & Speech	Marie Macy Surgical	Curtis Keswick Surgical
Frances Foree Pathology & Lab.	Lincoln Bui Pharmacy	Diep Do Nursing LTC	Timothy Rowen Anesthesiology	Emmanuel Mayo Nursing LTC	Patricia Montgomery Audiology & Speech
Jean Gurga Physical Medicine & Rehab.	Rajinder Chitkara Medical	Catherine Dumlaio Nursing M/S	Rodolfo Salindong Fiscal	Geraldine Root-Mauthe Social Work	Fernando Palumpon Medical
Hyvy Ho Nursing Rehab.	Claudia Davis Nursing AC	Diana Dumlaio Nursing Rehab.	Nieves Sidhu Pharmacy	Nenita Mazariego Human Resources	Dawn Stewart Nursing Rehab.
Karen Kapolnek Audiology & Speech	Thomas Frey Business Office	Mirian Duran Business Office	Eileen Stein Nutrition & Food	Helen Oribello Pharmacy	Wilaiwan Tanti Nursing AC
Ronni Kerrins Anesthesiology	Mark Holodniy Medical	Mary Goldstein GRECC	Virginia Sullivan Nursing M/S	Greg Rosales Prosthetics & Sensory Aids	Paul Williams Engineering
Russell LaBarre Engineering	Robert King Director's Office	Vincent Gong Psychology	Tracy Takahashi Pathology & Lab.	Katrunker Thompson Social Work	35 Years
Bruce Lehnert Surgical	Chung Le Engineering	Suzanne Hamilton Nutrition & Food	Catherine Van Natta Social Work	Margaret Turner Nursing AC	Richard Bale Psychology
Steven Lindley Psychiatry	Sofya Morgan Nursing M/S	Carmelita Hansen Pathology & Lab.	Susan Ward Nursing LTC	Dennis Walias Nursing MH	Noel Carter Nutrition & Food
Anne Kariuki Nursing LTC	Patricia Page Nuclear Medicine	Janet Hargadon Audiology & Speech	Steven Woodward Psychology	James Williams A&MMS	Carlos Mendez IRMS
Pham Nguyen Engineering	Brenda Pittman Nutrition & Food	Mei Hsu Pharmacy	25 Years	John Woody Nursing LTC	Mary Cathirell Medical
Irene Rademaker Medical	Ronald Roderick Blind Rehab. Center	Ely Huang Pharmacy	Patricia Callahan Nursing MH	Beverly Zehrung Nursing MS	Georgette Farrington Nursing Rehab.
Thomas Rice Surgical	Ofelia Sanchez Nursing MH	Steven Lacelle Nursing LTC	David Choate Engineering	Carol Valdon Nursing Rehab.	Yuri Saito Psychiatry
Daniel Shinn Nursing AC	Elvira Seril A&MMS	Anh Vuong-Lee Ambulatory Care	Edarlina Dacio Nursing Rehab.	30 Years	John Tribuiano A&MMS
George Smith Environmental Mgmt.	Janis Thom Nursing Rehab.	Marion Logan Medical	Santamma George Nursing M/S	Virginia Coker A&MMS	40 Years
Susan Thompson Psychiatry	Dominic Valdez Nursing Rehab.	Margaret Matsuoaka Nursing Rehab.	Akiko Giordono Human Resources	Ruth Cronkite Research	Elaine Ettman Pathology & Lab
Arthur Traum Medical	Sarah Valdes Nursing AC	Wendy Page Business Office	Matthew Giordono A&MMS	Cindy Erceg Fiscal	John Howland Environmental Mgmt.
Steve Tseng Medical	George-James Waltimire A&MMS	Shannon Parr Dental	Sandra Green Nursing Rehab.	Patrick Garcia IRMS	Ken Okamoto IRMS
Norayda Ver Nursing LTC	Estrellita Barcemo Nursing LTC	Elena San Pedro Pharmacy	Castora Feliciano Nursing LTC	George Garcia Environmental Mgmt.	Nick Samora Nursing Rehab.
			Juanita Gooden-Johnson Nursing LTC		

Retirees

Darryl Abney (21) Nutrition & Food	Margaret Griffin (5) Nursing	William Lakeman (31) Engineering	Joan Ross (29) Nursing
Felix Arcayan (18) A&MMS	Jeffrey Hansen (25) Pharmacy	Linda Lautner (37) Path & Lab	Frank Schleifer (33) Voluntary
Virginia Concepcion (34) Director	Gladys Henderson (31) Nursing	Pat Martinez (32) Nursing	Dorothy Smith (16) Nutrition & Food
Ernesto Concepcion (8) Nursing	Mei-Feng Hsu (20) Pharmacy	Margaret Matsuoaka (20) Nursing	Thomas Stromberg (41) Engineering
John Coulter (34) A&MMS	Nancy Jones (32) Pharmacy	Patricia McCarty (29) Research	Sheryl Whistance (23) Nursing
Steven Darrow (34) A&MMS	Judith Kane-Campbell (38) A&MMS	Lawrence Merrill (17) Domiciliary	Joseph Wood (16) Nursing
James Deusterman (12) Nursing	C'Ethel Kelly (6) Nursing	Edward Minglana (21) Nutrition & Food	Pamela Young Mallory (16) Nutrition & Food
Luis Fajardo (42) Path & Lab	Marion Kopmann (29) Human Resources	James Pitzer (39) Engineering	
Candace Gallagher (27) Nursing	Steven LaCelle (20) Nursing	Guy Reger (24) Police	<i>(years of service are indicated in parentheses.)</i>

Fitzgerald is New Assistant Director



Curt Campbell

Thomas J. Fitzgerald III was appointed Assistant Director for VAPAHCS in October 2006. His responsibilities include direct supervision of all the non-medical services at VAPAHCS. Mr. Fitzgerald is a disabled veteran who served in the U.S Army, active and reserve, for 16 years as a medic, including service in Desert Storm. Mr. Fitzgerald began his VA career in 1988 as a nursing assistant at the North Chicago VAMC. His last position was VAPAHCS' Chief Environmental Management Service.

Mr. Fitzgerald attended Grambling State University on a football scholarship; he is also a graduate of the VA management development course in conjunction with the University of Alabama Birmingham and the Leadership VA 2003 class. He is certified as a Healthcare Environmental Services Professional by the American Society for Healthcare Environmental Services, an affiliate of the American Hospital Association.

Dwinell Takes Over Clinical Support

Nora Lynn Dwinell has been selected as the Director for Clinical Support for the Office of the Chief of Staff. Dwinell will oversee management of clinical services and activities throughout VAPAHCS. Prior to this position, Dwinell served as the Staff Assistant to the Director. She joined VAPAHCS in July 2003 as the Health System Specialist to the Chief of Staff.

Dwinell earned a Masters of Health Science degree in Health Policy and a Certificate in Health Finance and Management at the Johns Hopkins School of Hygiene and Public Health. She also has a Bachelors of Science degree in Physiology from UC Davis. This past summer, Dwinell and her husband welcomed a beautiful baby girl, Alexis Mechele, into their lives.



Curt Campbell

Peery Runs Human Resources

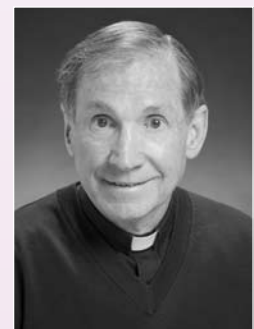


Curt Campbell

Ms. Lori Peery was appointed Chief, Human Resources Management Service (HRMS) at VAPAHCS on June 11, 2006. Ms. Peery, who began working for the VA in 1977, transferred to VAPAHCS in 1989. Not only does she have extensive management experience, she also has experience in human resources management. She held administrative management positions in Psychiatry Service, where she served as Administrative Officer from January 1999 to January 2001. Ms. Peery was the Director for Clinical Support and Staff Assistant to the Chief of Staff from January 2001 to June 2006.

Father Coleman New Chief of Chaplains

His is a very familiar face and smile as one walks the halls of the VA hospital at Palo Alto. Father John (Kenneth) Coleman has been affiliated with the Chaplain Service of VA Palo Alto Health Care System for 16 years and served as Acting Chief, Chaplain Service, over the past six months. In September 2006, Father Coleman was selected to serve as Chief, Chaplain Service. Father Coleman is a 1971 graduate of Saint Patrick's Seminary, Menlo Park, California. He earned a Ph.D. in English and American Literature from Indiana University in 1985. Congratulations and best of luck.



Curt Campbell

Dr. Joseph Liao New Chief of Urology



Dr. Joseph Liao is the new Chief of Urology at the VAPAHCS. He also serves as an assistant professor and co-director of Minimally Invasive Urologic Surgery at the Stanford Department of Urology. Dr. Liao graduated magna cum laude from Harvard College in 1993. After graduating from Stanford, Dr. Liao trained at UCLA where he completed his residency in 2003 and fellowship in endourology and minimally invasive surgery in 2006. Dr. Liao is looking forward to bringing the latest innovations in endoscopic, laparoscopic, and robotic-assisted surgical techniques to the Palo Alto VA.

Dr. Liao's research interests focus on development of novel diagnostic and therapeutic modalities based on bionanotechnology. He has developed a point-of-care biosensor for rapid detection of urinary pathogens. He has received funding from the National Institute of Biomedical Imaging and Bioengineering and the American Foundation of Urologic Disease. Dr. Liao will have an active laboratory at the Palo Alto VA and hopes to continue to foster interdisciplinary and translational research.

Dr. Jason Lee is New Vascular Surgery Chief

Dr. Jason Lee graduated with honors from the California Institute of Technology in 1994, and finished medical school at the University of California-San Diego in 1998. He completed his general surgery residency at Harbor-UCLA in 2004. He is board-certified in general surgery and is currently a second year fellow in the Vascular Surgery Fellowship Program. His duties include participating in the multitude of complex open and endovascular cases at Stanford and the VA.

Dr. Lee manages the long-term follow-up database of over 550 endovascular aneurysm patients treated at Stanford over the past eight years. He also organizes the weekly vascular review series for the residents and participates in the didactic teaching for the medical students. Dr. Lee's research interests include outcomes of catheter-based interventions compared to open surgery, functional outcomes after thoracic outlet decompression, imaging surveillance after endovascular aneurysm repair, and the application of endovascular technologies to thoracic and thoracoabdominal aneurysms.



AHEAD Team Improves Care for Dementia

By Betty Wexler



Curt Campbell

The AHEAD II project (Advances in Home-Based Primary Care for End of Life in Advancing Dementia) began in 2002 to help selected VA teams create local improvements in key areas of diagnosis and early intervention, symptom management, caregiver support and staff education.

Approximately 20 outpatient-based teams were competitively selected to participate in AHEAD II and learned to use the rapid-cycle quality improvement model (Plan-Do-Study-Act, PDSA) to improve care of patients with dementia. The teams learned a lot from each other about applying improvements through learning sessions and online communications.

Team members were from HBPC and the GRECC. Over the past four years the team has broadened its outreach and expanded its members. Now called AHEAD

(Advances in Home-based primary care, Extended care, Ambulatory/Acute care for Dementia) at VA Palo Alto, there is at least one member from each of these services on the team recognizing that veterans with dementia pass through all settings and deserve optimal care wherever they are.

The dedicated commitment of the AHEAD team members goes beyond the call of duty. Members strongly believe in what they are doing and commit not only their time but their hearts to the process. Thankfully, the VA Palo Alto Health Care System recognizes the dedicated efforts of small teams such as the AHEAD team and supports their creativity, efforts, and effectiveness.

VAPAHCS Dentists Support East Bay Stand Down

The recent East Bay Stand Down at the Alameda County Fair Grounds, was “bumped up a notch” by providing not only new clothing, boots and other basic needs, but this time offering dental service, provided in large part by staff from the VAPAHCS.

The East Bay Stand Down takes place every two years and nearly 400 veterans attended this year’s event. Dental screenings were provided to 279 veterans who were either treated on site or referred for dental care. Nearly 50 more veterans received treatment by community dentists in Alameda and Contra Costa counties.

The success of the event was the result of a collaboration of private practice dentists in the immediate area and dentists from the VA Northern California and VA Palo Alto Health Care System.



Dr. John Jow, VA Northern California, and Tim Verceles, staff dentist at VAPAHCS, work together to support the East Bay Stand Down.



VAPAHCS’ Dr. Joycelyn Lee (left) joins staff from Northern California to help serve veterans at the recent Stand Down.

Working with Dr. Tim Verceles, VAPAHCS dentist, were dental residents Dr. Kathryn Le, Dr. Jocelyn Lee and Dr. Phong Ta.

Stand Down is a term used during war to describe the practice of removing combat troops from the field and taking care of their basic needs in a safe area. Since the first East Bay Stand Down in 1999, the goals have been to provide a respite from the streets, so that needy and homeless veterans can examine avenues of assistance. Stand Down staff help to place the participants into residential programs, offer employment, and provide follow-up programs of various types.

Volunteer Receives Lifetime Award

Marie Dunlap (seated) was recently awarded VAPAHCS’ first ever Volunteer Lifetime Achievement Award from Director Lisa Freeman and Chief of Voluntary Services Bill Ball. For 47-years Mrs. Dunlap and her organization have dedicated time and money to support the men and women in VA hospitals. United Voluntary Service, under Mrs. Dunlap’s direction, supported over 70 VA facilities throughout the nation. Mrs. Dunlap retired from volunteering this year. “Marie is one of a kind,” said Ball, “she will be sorely missed.” Joining in the celebration was Laura Balun, Director VA Voluntary Service; Mary Lee, National President United Voluntary Services; and Helen Hennessey, United Voluntary Services volunteer.



Doctors Without Borders

Palo Alto Surgeon Gives Hope to the Desperate

by Beth Curran

Doctors Without Borders, or Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) is the purveyor of the only organized healthcare in Northern Cote d'Ivoire, the Ivory Coast. The country has been torn by civil war since 2002 and the northern region suffers from lack of any viable infrastructure. There is no post office. No police force. Inside the hospital there are no sinks. No laboratory. Electricity is unpredictable. Patients are often desperately ill by the time they seek medical attention and the treatment plan is often only to make a patient more comfortable, not to rid the body of disease.

"The most sophisticated piece of equipment was a glucometer," Dr. Wren recounts.

Dr. Sherry Wren, a general surgeon at VAPAHCS, recently spent five weeks in Cote d'Ivoire with MSF. Her days involved a never ending queue of babies burned by hot cooking oil, victims of gunshot wounds, and infections



that we only see here on television. Typhoid, TB, malaria, tetanus and even hippopotamus bites are par for the course. Because it is unsafe to be outdoors after dark, sunrise brings a swell of patients who need to be seen. All are seen but only those needing emergency care can be operated on.

Dr. Wren recalls one patient who was the nephew of a member of the Rebel Army. Though she never felt unsafe inside the hospital, she could not help but wonder, "What will happen to me if this patient dies?" Luckily, for her and for the patient, he survived.

"You have got to be flexible to do this," Dr. Wren commented. "You have to know that it is going to be nothing like it is at home."

Now that she is back, Dr. Wren is able to ruminate on the time she spent overseas. One of only 12 American general surgeons MSF was able to attract this year, she knows her time there was invaluable to the people of Cote d'Ivoire. She was called upon to help people in ways she never does at home, at times doing facial reconstructions or fixing a dislocated jaw. She sometimes learned how to do procedures as needed out of textbooks. The experience has made her immeasurably thankful for the quality of life and care here in the United States.

"A smile or thank you from a patient or their family means so much to you as a doctor," Dr. Wren says. "When you see what people go through to get to the hospital or just live their lives it makes their smiles even more precious."

VAPAHCS Nurses Support NOVA at Marine Corp Marathon

VAPAHCS once again shows outstanding team performance. Alice Naqvi, Gigi Beckner and Ann Narciso participated as NOVA runners in the 31st Marine Corp Marathon events in Washington, D.C., this October. Not only did they represent nursing at VAPAHCS, they raised funds for the NOVA Foundation nursing scholarships in the process.

Alice and Gigi reported that they had a wonderful time participating with over 30 other NOVA runners in the 10K event. Ann was one of 18 registered NOVA runners among 34,000 marathon runners, and it was truly a wonderful event. Ann, who had never run before, much less competed in a marathon, started training in April. She was especially grateful to see Alice and Gigi at the finish line cheering her on for those last 50 yards!

The Palo Alto NOVA chapter was recognized as a leader in supporting the NOVA foundations as they raised over \$7,000

for the NOVA Foundation. Ann received the top awards for fundraising among the marathon runners. Gigi received a second place award for fund raising among the 10K runners. Overall over \$51,000 was raised for the NOVA Foundation.

Ambulatory Care Nursing Receives Award



Chuck Revell

New Discharge Guidelines and Measures Take Hold at VAPAHCS

By Jodi Bisely, RN

In order to improve customer service, the VA Central Office is mandating a change in VA hospitals' discharge times. Starting this October the discharge time will be 11:00 a.m. If a patient is unable to meet the 11:00 a.m. discharge time they will be offered a "discharge appointment" or "discharge slot," which sets a predetermined time they anticipate they will leave.

By having patients discharged early in the day customer satisfaction will increase, because the "wait time" for a hospital bed by patients in the ER/clinics/OR/scheduled admissions will be decreased, and surgeries and procedures will not be delayed or cancelled.

Discharge appointments/slots will help VA staff plan and coordinate the veterans care with services such as social work, physical therapy, occupational therapy, and pharmacy. This will ensure the veterans needs will be met in a timely manner prior to discharge.

Discharge appointments will also help smooth discharges out over the course of the day, avoiding "batching" of discharges at one particular time. This will reduce the work load for staff in nursing and housekeeping by spreading out the tasks involved over a longer time period.

Planning for discharge to home using discharge appointments will help the veteran and his family to anticipate when transportation home will be needed and to prepare the home for his or her return from the hospital.

For the second consecutive year, VAPAHCS' Ambulatory Care Nursing received the VA National Nursing Innovations Award. This year's award focused on Advanced Clinic Access (ACA): Redesign for Improved Patient Outcomes and/or Healthcare Delivery Processes Beyond Primary Care. VA Nursing had 40 submissions from across the country and the 10 selected were described as the "best of the best".

Ambulatory Care's team submitted the changes they implemented to improve access in their Specialty Clinics, specifically Urology. The ten ACA Principles that were used as a guide to develop the 24-Hour Emergency Department Observation Unit (EDOU) in 2004 and to improve access to our Primary Care Clinics have since been extended to our Specialty Clinics.

The team's application highlighted improvements made in the Urology Clinics based on their high volume, high risk, and great need. The Clinics have taken the mantra that ACA is everyone's job. This vision and collaborative interdisciplinary approach has allowed the Specialty Clinics to vastly modify care practices and improve access so our veterans can be seen when they want and need to be seen. Overall these clinics decreased wait times and optimized clinic appointment availability and patient satisfaction.

Congratulations to these staff members who are recognized for their innovative solutions in improving access to our veterans. The team members are Sandra Parkes, David Renfro, Anita Straley, Judith Thielen, Fuad Freiha and Deborah Sisty.

VAPAHCS Doctor Publishes Book



Audrey Shafer, a physician in anesthesiology at VAPAHCS, recently published a book entitled *The Mailbox*. In the book, Audrey utilizes her experience in working with veterans to illuminate their sacrifices and suffering and how war affects soldiers even decades after the fighting stops.



The story centers around a young child, his Vietnam veteran uncle, and a unique exchange between the boy and a mysterious correspondent.

Audrey Shafer's interest in writing this story began during the buildup to the Iraq war in late 2002 and early 2003. She found that her patients were deeply affected by the upcoming war and its uncertainties. They wanted to express their profound empathy for the soon-to-be-deployed soldiers and relate their own war

experiences – even shortly before entering the operating suite. Moved by the experience of witnessing, Audrey gained a greater understanding of the long lasting effects of military service. The *Mailbox* is a response to her experiences and an attempt to honor the sacrifices that continue to be made by veterans.

Audrey Shafer graduated from Harvard University and Stanford University School of Medicine. She completed her anesthesiology training at the University of Pennsylvania and fellowship in clinical research at Stanford University Department of Anesthesia. Dr. Shafer teaches anesthesia residents, medical students, and undergraduates.

In addition to writing this novel, her interests include the language of medicine, communication and ethics in the operating room, and poetry. Her poems are published in various journals. She is also the co-director of the Biomedical Ethics and Medical Humanities Concentration, in which Stanford medical students receive course credit and grants to study the intersections of the arts, ethics, and humanities with medicine.

In the acknowledgements section of the book, Dr. Shafer states, "I would like to thank the veterans whose sacrifices, empathy and trust inspired this book."

(Continued from page 1)

Surgeons Team with Robots

this is easily overcome once the benefits of using the system for both the surgeon and the patient are felt."

The purchase of the da Vinci Surgical System will allow VAPAHCS to introduce new surgeries and improve upon surgeries that are currently being performed. A radical prostatectomy and laparoscopic weight loss surgeries are just two examples of the types of surgeries that can be performed with the system.

"We are on the cutting edge of medical technologies," said Safadi. The da Vinci Surgical System is an excellent example of how VAPAHCS is combining technology and staff expertise to enhance the types of services we are able to provide for veterans.



Chuck Revell

VA PALO ALTO
HEALTH CARE SYSTEM

Cancer Support Group

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At the
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Veterans, Non-Vets and Spouses Welcome

For Additional Information Call:
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You Make a Difference!

Submitted by our veterans and their families

SPD Technician **John Costodio** takes his job very seriously by ensuring delivery of special and routine dressings, colostomy bags and tubing on a moments notice. Trained recently in safe application of trapezes, he quickly came to the rescue of a patient sitting next to his trapeze and heavy pole. He went on to reapply the pole that had not arrived on the new bed. John also checked and tightened as needed every trapeze attached to other new beds. John needs to be recognized for his diligent efforts in keeping our veterans safe.
– Karen Girton

I received a wonderful letter from a veteran complimenting **Lori Hanson** on the great job she has done in Building 5. He praised her customer service skills and admired her ability to cope with all of the issues that she faces on a daily basis. Let me add my appreciation for the wonderful work she does in the **General Medicine Clinic**. She has single-handedly run that clinic for over a year and inspired everyone with her work ethic and caring attitude for our veterans. I can't thank her enough for the job she has done.
– Tom Kane



Chuck Revell



Curt Campbell

Marlene Specht is a really nice person who made extra effort to see me at my convenience. She is respectful and never late and helped me tremendously. I couldn't talk at all and with her help, I am making progress. She is always there and goes beyond what is expected. I'd like to send up three commendations – she deserves it. She treats me like a person, not a patient.

– A veteran

I received a call today from a veteran who wanted to express his sincere appreciation for the work **Claudia Davis** and **Latonia Watkins** have done at the **Stockton Clinic**. He has been using the clinic for the last nine months and no matter how hectic things get, he found that both of them always had a smile and responded to his needs in a prompt and professional manner. He wanted me to know that he thought both of Claudia and Latonia were outstanding people and appreciated their efforts. I want to add my appreciation for all the work they have done at Stockton. Between the move to the new clinic and being short staffed they have continued to focus on providing great customer service to our veterans.
– Tom Kane

Dr. Mark Holodnyi and **Jessica Lopez** of the Palo Alto HIV clinic are simply awesome. Each of them is very compassionate. Not only are they a caring staff, but they thoroughly explain procedures and help me understand what is happening. After every visit, I feel very special to be in their care. Awesome job!

– A veteran



Curt Campbell



Curt Campbell

Yosief Fesseha (far left) and **Elmore Brown** (left) volunteered to work on their Saturday off to support the PC Support staff in collecting and encrypting computer laptops. They significantly contributed by documenting the status of laptops, performing encryption functions, and assisting other staff. This is truly an act above and beyond.

– Ronald Walker

THE epicenter

is published by and for
employees of the VA Palo Alto
Health Care System.

Submissions should be received by the 1st working day of the month to be included in upcoming issues. Due to space limitations, it is not possible to publish all submissions.

We welcome any comments, suggestions or story ideas you may have; please contact Kerri Childress (00K) at ext. 64888 or directly at 650-858-3925.

VA Palo Alto Health Care System

3801 Miranda Avenue, Palo Alto, CA 94304 • Phone (650) 493-5000 • www.palo-alto.med.va.gov